

**Rotator Cuff Repair  
Physical Therapy Protocol  
Dr. Allan Hunt**

**Phase I 0-4 Weeks**

Educate the patient on self-care/hygiene, supporting shoulder with sling/abductor support, warning signs including fever, erythema and excessive/unrelenting pain, use of TENS unit

Ice 3-5 times per day for 15 minutes each, especially after therapy. Modalities PRN.

Post-op visit at 10-14 days after procedure

May eat, limited typing, write, brush teeth with sling in place

Sling with abductor pillow for 4-6 weeks depending on size of tear/ repair

Pendulum (Codman's) exercises 3-5 times per day for 10-15 minutes each time

No AROM exercises

PROM in all planes- \*\*If subscapularis tear, no ER > 20 degrees for 4 weeks, then progress gradually to patient tolerance\*\*

Exercises include table slides, AROM hand, wrist and elbow, scapular squeezes

\*\*If biceps tenodesis, no AROM with flexion of elbow or forearm supination for 4 weeks\*\*

Encourage home exercise program, use of ice/ NSAIDS after therapy and exercises

**Phase II 4-8 Weeks**

Discontinue sling at 4 weeks, 6 weeks if larger tear or patient uses tobacco

Recheck with surgeon at 6-8 weeks

Joint mobilization all plane PRN and gentle PNF rhythmic stabilization. Modalities PRN.

Exercises include isometrics in all planes, AAROM UBE, cane exercises beginning in gravity minimized position and progressing to anti-gravity as patient gradually tolerates, wall push-ups, prone scapular stabilization/ strengthening.

Initiating exercises should be "submaximal" meaning that exercise is pain-free and avoiding activity that compromises form or posture

**Phase III 8-10 Weeks**

Wean modalities

Capsular stretching to gain maximal ROM

Exercises include AROM progressing from gravity minimized to anti-gravity, side-lying resisted external rotation, closed chain UE exercises (wall/counter push-ups, quadruped, planking if able to maintain scapular position)

AAROM goals 150+ flexion, 120-150 abduction, 45-60 external rotation, internal rotation to back pocket to belt line

**Phase IV 10 weeks to Discharge**

Maximize functional AROM, strength, power and endurance

PREs to tolerance- dinner knife, can of soup, 1-3 pound weights all planes (No Theraband)

Work specific/ sport specific activities beginning at 14-16 weeks progressing until discharge

Return to clinic at 5 months after surgery

Educate that maximal improvement can take up to 1 year after procedure